

PD Poetry - September 2022

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MOONLIGHT

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Motley and other poems, by Walter de la Mare

The far moon maketh lovers wise
In her pale beauty trembling down,
Lending curved cheeks, dark lips, dark eyes,
A strangeness not their own.
And, though they shut their lids to kiss,
In starless darkness peace to win,
Even on that secret world from this
Her twilight enters in.

THE WERE-WOLF

The Project Gutenberg eBook of

An Indian Ass, by Harold Acton

All in the hush of a green night,
He left the downy marriage-bed
In a chill sweat, his face chalk-white,
His voice spoke hoarsely of the dead.

The young wife, wakened by his howls,
Clutched bed-post dumb with fright, surprise;
Like lepers huddled under cowls,
Red films lay on her husband's eyes.

"I am become a wolf," he said,
"And I will to the churchyard-site
To throttle graves, to raise the dead.
Strange flesh will be my fare to-night!"

And barking at the slice of moon
He scampered nimbly on all fours.
She never saw him more; one noon
She spied the imprint of wolf's claws.

SONG

The Project Gutenberg eBook,
Twenty, by Stella Benson

If I have dared to surrender some imitation of splendour,
Something I knew that was tender, something I loved that was brave,
If in my singing I showed songs that I heard on my road,
Were they not debts that I owed, rather than gifts that I gave?

If certain hours on their climb up the long ladder of time
Turned my confusion to rhyme, drove me to dare an attempt,
If by fair chance I might seem sometimes abreast of my theme,
Was I translating a dream? Was it a dream that you dreamt?

High and miraculous skies bless and astonish my eyes;
All my dead secrets arise, all my dead stories come true.
Here is the Gate to the Sea. Once you unlocked it for me;
Now, since you gave me the key, shall I unlock it for you?

QUOTIDIAN VISION.

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Selected Poems, by Aldous Huxley

There is a sadness in the street,
And sullenly the folk I meet
Droop their heads as they walk along,
Without a smile, without a song.
A mist of cold and muffling grey
Falls, fold by fold, on another day
That dies unwept. But suddenly,
Under a tunnelled arch I see
On flank and haunch the chestnut gleam
Of horses in a lamplit steam;
And the dead world moves for me once more
With beauty for its living core.

TELESILA

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Heliadora, by Hilda Doolittle

*In Argos--that statue of her;
at her feet the scroll of her
love-poetry, in her hand a helmet.*

War is a fevered god
who takes alike
maiden and king and clod,
and yet another one,
(ah withering peril!)
deprives alike,
with equal skill,
alike indifferently,
hoar spearsman of his shaft,
wan maiden of her zone,
even he,
Love who is great War's
very over-lord.

War bent
and kissed the forehead,
yet Love swift,
planted on chin
and tenderest cyclamen lift
of fragrant mouth,
fevered and honeyed breath,
breathing o'er and o'er
those tendrils of her hair,
soft kisses
like bright flowers.

Love took
and laid the sweet,
(being extravagant,)
on lip and chin and cheek,
but ah he failed
even he,
before the luminous eyes
that dart

no suave appeal,
alas, impelling me
to brave incontinent,
grave Pallas' high command.

And yet the mouth!
ah Love ingratiate,
how was it you,
so poignant, swift and sure,
could not have taken all
and left me free,
free to desert the Argives,
let them burn,
free yet to turn
and let the city fall:
yea, let high War
take all his vengeful way,
for what am I?
I cannot save nor stay
the city's fall.

War is a fevered god,
(yet who has writ as she
the power of Love?)
War bent and kissed the forehead,
that bright brow,
ignored the chin
and the sweet mouth,
for that and the low laugh were his,
Eros ingratiate,
who sadly missed
in all the kisses count,
those eyebrows
and swart eyes,
O valiant one
who bowed
falsely and vilely trapped us,
traitorous lord.

And yet,
(remembrance mocks,)
should I have bent the maiden
to a kiss?
Ares the lover

or enchanting Love?
but had I moved
I feared
for that astute regard;
for that bright vision,
how might I have erred?
I might have marred and swept
another not so sweet
into my exile;
I might have kept a look
recalling many and many a woman's look,
not this alone,
astute, imperious, proud.

And yet
I turn and ask
again, again, again,
who march to death,
what was it worth,
reserve and pride and hurt?
what is it worth
to such as I
who turn to meet
the invincible Spartans'
massed and serried host?
what had it cost, a kiss?

THE SALAMANDER ISLES
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The Janitor's Boy, by Nathalia Crane

Snaring lights surmount the sand-dunes of the Salamander Isles;
The chime buoys chant new tunes each tide, false soundings run for
miles.

And yet, for lures like these we set such sail as we could make;
We steered by stars that sorrowed, with the moonlight in our wake.

We dipped or rose supremely as we shook our freeboard clear;
We clung, but smiled serenely when the head seas swept our gear.

We were captives of the currents, we were harried by the flaw,
Or the red mists from the marshes mocked the navigator's law.

Glimpsed we evanescent channels, marked by flares upon a wreck,
But the channels shoaled to shallows ere the tops could hail the deck.

Yet we won to realization that the ports long sought in vain,
Were illusive as the May moths or the madrigals of Spain;

And that only charts from China, drawn by wizards full of wiles,
Would give the proper bearings for the Salamander Isles.

THE SWEDISH MOTHER

(NEBRASKA)

The Project Gutenberg eBook of
April twilights and other poems, by Willa Cather

_ "You shall hear the tale again--_
_ Hush, my red-haired daughter."_
_ Brightly burned the sunset gold_
_ On the black pond water._

_ Red the pasture ridges gleamed_
_ Where the sun was sinking._
_ Slow the windmill rasped and wheezed_
_ Where the herd was drinking._

_ On the kitchen doorstep low_
_ Sat a Swedish mother;_
_ In her arms one baby slept,_
_ By her sat another._

"All time, 'way back in old countree,
Your grandpa, he been good to me.
Your grandpa, he been young man, too,
And I been yust li'l' girl, like you.
All time in spring, when evening come,
We go bring sheep an' li'l' lambs home.
We go big field, 'way up on hill,
Ten times high like our windmill.
One time your grandpa leave me wait
While he call sheep down. By de gate

I sit still till night come dark;
Rabbits run an' strange dogs bark,
Old owl hoot, an' your modder cry,
She been so 'fraid big bear come by.
Last, 'way off, she hear de sheep,
Li'l' bells ring and li'l' lambs bleat.
Then all sheep come over de hills,
Big white dust, an' old dog Nils.
Then come grandpa, in his arm
Li'l' sick lamb dat somet'ing harm.
He so young then, big and strong,
Pick li'l' girl up, take her 'long,--
Poor li'l' tired girl, yust like you,--
Lift her up an' take her too.
Hold her tight an' carry her far,--
'Ain't no light but yust one star.
Sheep go 'bah-h,' an' road so steep;
Li'l' girl she go fast asleep."

Every night the red-haired child
Begs to hear the story,
When the pasture ridges burn
With the sunset glory.

She can never understand,
Since the tale ends gladly,
Why her mother, telling it,
Always smiles so sadly.

Wonderingly she looks away
Where her mother's gazing;
Only sees the drifting herd,
In the sunset grazing.

INCOMPATIBLE

Project Gutenberg's etext of
A Sheaf of Verses, by Marguerite Radclyffe-Hall

To-day I hate that bitter creed,
Whereby the groaning soul is taught
That God Almighty finds the need
Of pain, ere true salvation's wrought!

Dear God, who did create the trees,
The scented flowers, the misty view,
The uplands' breezy ecstasies,
The Ocean's iridescent blue,

The arches of the endless sky,
The magic of a day in Spring,
The down upon a butterfly,
The anthem that the skylarks sing.

All perfect growing harmonies,
Each tuneful sound and beauteous sight,
That lifts us from our miseries
To raptures of supreme delight,

Can I believe that Thou hast willed
Each bitter moment I have spent?
Whereby in anguish were fulfilled
Thy hard decrees of punishment?

To-day is June! Since early dawn
My heart has felt the sun's caress,
I bless the hour that I was born
To witness so much loveliness.

And I would have a _God_ of love,
A tender God, who looks and smiles
From some not distant throne above
Upon His fair created miles.

I know not who has placed the thorns
That pierce, on our human brow,
But I would pray on these sweet morns.
Dear God, Oh! Let it not be Thou.

LIGHTS

The Internet Archive ebook of
Embers, by John Myers O'Hara

INSUPERABLE lights, you are my life,
Braving the shadow to the final goal!

Supreme illusion, over human strife
You shed a glamor sateless to my soul.

Your fever, in my veins, is like dread wine,
The banquet cup with poison in the lees;

And yet no fear can make it less divine,
Nor rob it of its high felicities.

You weave a magic to enchant the nights,
Forever true, you bring me fair romance;

My opiate you are, poetic lights,
I drink your splendor in a mighty glance!

ON A PRIMITIVE CANOE

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Harlem Shadows, by Claude McKay

Here, passing lonely down this quiet lane,
Before a mud-splashed window long I pause
To gaze and gaze, while through my active brain
Still thoughts are stirred to wakefulness; because
Long, long ago in a dim unknown land,
A massive forest-tree, ax-felled, adze-hewn,
Was deftly done by cunning mortal hand
Into a symbol of the tender moon.
Why does it thrill more than the handsome boat
That bore me o'er the wild Atlantic ways,
And fill me with rare sense of things remote
From this harsh life of fretful nights and days?
I cannot answer but, whate'er it be,
An old wine has intoxicated me.

DOCK RATS

The Project Gutenberg EBook of
Poems, by Marianne Moore

There are human beings who seem to regard the place as craftily
as we do—who seem to feel that it is a good place to come
home to. On what a river; wide—twinkling like a chopped sea under
some
of the finest shipping in the

world: the square-rigged four-master, the liner, the battleship,
like the two-
thirds submerged section of an iceberg; the tug—strong moving
thing,
dipping and pushing, the bell striking as it comes; the steam
yacht, lying
like a new made arrow on the

stream; the ferry-boat—a head assigned, one to each compartment,
making
a row of chessmen set for play. When the wind is from the east,
the smell is of apples; of hay, the aroma increased and decreased
suddenly as the wind changes;

of rope; of mountain leaves for florists. When it is from the west,
it is
an elixir. There is occasionally a parrakeet
arrived from Brazil, clasping and clawing; or a monkey—tail and
feet
in readiness for an over-

ture. All palms and tail; how delightful! There is the sea, moving
the bulk-
head with its horse strength; and the multiplicity of rudders
and propellers; the signals, shrill, questioning, peremptory,
diverse;
the wharf cats and the barge dogs—it

is easy to overestimate the value of such things. One does
not live in such a place from motives of expediency
but because to one who has been accustomed to it, shipping is the
most congenial thing in the world.

COUNTRYWOMEN

The Project Gutenberg EBook of
Poems, by Katherine Mansfield

These be two
Country women.
What a size!
Grand big arms
And round red faces;
Big substantial
Sit down places;
Great big bosoms firm as cheese
Bursting through their country jackets;
Wide big laps
And sturdy knees;
Hands outspread,
Round and rosy,
Hands to hold
A country posy
Or a baby or a lamb--
And such eyes!
Stupid, shifty, small and sly
Peeping through a slit of sty,
Squinting through their neighbours' plackets.

1914.

HAMLET MICURE

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Spoon River Anthology, by Edgar Lee Masters

IN a lingering fever many visions come to you:
I was in the little house again
With its great yard of clover
Running down to the board-fence,
Shadowed by the oak tree,
Where we children had our swing.
Yet the little house was a manor hall
Set in a lawn, and by the lawn was the sea.
I was in the room where little Paul
Strangled from diphtheria,

But yet it was not this room--
It was a sunny verandah enclosed
With mullioned windows
And in a chair sat a man in a dark cloak
With a face like Euripides.
He had come to visit me, or I had gone to visit him--I could not tell.
We could hear the beat of the sea, the clover nodded
Under a summer wind, and little Paul came
With clover blossoms to the window and smiled.
Then I said: "What is "divine despair" Alfred?"
"Have you read 'Tears, Idle Tears'?" he asked.
"Yes, but you do not there express divine despair."
"My poor friend," he answered, "that was why the despair
Was divine."

THE DISCOVERY.

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Heartsease and Rue, by James Russell Lowell

I watched a moorland torrent run
Down through the drift itself had made,
Golden as honey in the sun,
Of darkest amber in the shade.

In this wild glen at last, methought,
The magic's secret I surprise;
Here Celia's guardian fairy caught
The changeful splendors of her eyes.

All else grows tame, the sky's one blue,
The one long languish of the rose,
But these, beyond prevision new,
Shall charm and startle to the close.

WEEDS

The Project Gutenberg EBook of
Poems, by Edna St. Vincent Millay

White with daisies and red with sorrel
And empty, empty under the sky!--
Life is a quest and love a quarrel--
Here is a place for me to lie.

Daisies spring from damnèd seeds,
And this red fire that here I see
Is a worthless crop of crimson weeds,
Cursed by farmers thriftily.

But here, unhated for an hour,
The sorrel runs in ragged flame,
The daisy stands, a bastard flower,
Like flowers that bear an honest name.

And here a while, where no wind brings
The baying of a pack athirst,
May sleep the sleep of blessed things
The blood too bright, the brow accurst.

WHERE LILIES GROW.

Project Gutenberg's

The Bush Fire, by Ida Lee

Where lilies grow;
The dewdrops linger on the flowers,
The birds' sweet singing chimes the hours,
I love to sit there listening,
And watch the fish there glistening.
They glance and dart both in and out,
And turn themselves all round about,
Where lilies grow.

Where lilies grow;
A pace or two the violets sweet
Spread like a carpet 'neath my feet;
The rushes tall in clusters stand;
I reach and touch them with my hand;
And yellow kingcups there unfold,
They circle like a band of gold
Where lilies grow.

Where lilies grow;
So calm, so still it is, and deep,
Around the edge green fringes peep,
Just up above the trailing weeds

Entwining, spread among the reeds,
Then hang them down along the pool,
Which lies beneath so calm and cool,
Where lilies grow.

A PENNY FARE TO BABYLON
The Project Gutenberg EBook of
The wooden Pegasus, by Dame Edith Sitwell

“A penny fare to Babylon,
A penny for each thought!”
“Oh, ma’am, no, ma’am,
Can’t be bought!
The Sun gives pots of money,
The Moon, her bread and honey,
When humming like a clover-field
I go up to town.
Whitened by the Moon’s flour,
All the birds I own,
Lest they be baked into a pie,
Are flown, dear, flown.
Though you whistle in the corridors
That dance into my brain--
Oh, ma’am, no, ma’am,
They will not come again.”

PARTED
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Picture-Show, by Siegfried Sassoon

Sleepless I listen to the surge and drone
And drifting roar of the town's undertone;
Till through quiet falling rain I hear the bells
Tolling and chiming their brief tune that tells
Day's midnight end. And from the day that's over
No flashes of delight I can recover;
But only dreary winter streets, and faces
Of people moving in loud clanging places:
And I in my loneliness, longing for you...

For all I did to-day, and all I'll do
To-morrow, in this city of intense
Arteried activities that throb and strive,
Is but a beating down of that suspense
Which holds me from your arms.

I am alive

Only that I may find you at the end
Of these slow-striking hours I toil to spend,
Putting each one behind me, knowing but this--
That all my days are turning toward your kiss;
That all expectancy awaits the deep
Consoling passion of your eyes, that keep
Their radiance for my coming, and their peace
For when I find in you my love's release.

BLACK HORIZONS

Google Books etext of

Slabs of the Sunburnt West

By Carl Sandburg

Black horizons, come up.

Black horizons, kiss me.

That is all; so many lies; killing so cheap;

babies so cheap; blood, people, so cheap; and

land high, land dear; a speck of the earth

costs; a suck at the tit of Mother Dirt so

clean and strong, it costs; fences, papers,

sheriffs; fences, laws, guns; and so many

stars and so few hours to dream; such a big

song and so little a footing to stand and

sing; take a look; wars to come; red rivers

to cross.

Black horizons, come up.

Black horizons, kiss me.

RAIN ON THE RIVER

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Among the Trees Again, by Evaleen Stein

The skies are gray, where far and wide,
Beyond the water-willows,
The marshes spread their emerald tide
Of blossom-crested billows.

And on the vague horizon's rim,
In vaporous purple masses,
The distant woods show soft and dim
Across the lush, green grasses.

An east wind stirs the ivory balls
Upon the button-bushes;
And hark! a hidden rain-bird calls
From out the blowing rushes.

Within the water, yonder spray
Of rosy mallow flowers
Turns faint and pale, till not more gray
The cloudy heaven lowers.

And all the birches' tender green
An ashen hue is growing;
While mottled with a silver sheen
The ruffled waves are flowing.

Then softly through the forest leaves,
That turn, and toss, and quiver,
The rain, with murmurous cadence, weaves
A roundel in the river.

It dots the waves with dancing pearls,

It gleams, and streams, and twinkles;
It sweeps and sinks in silvery swirls,
And rings, and sings, and tinkles.

The clustering sedges dip and sway,
Till, after fitful failing,
The sun bursts gaily through the gray,
And craggy clouds are sailing

Where, southward, in a brilliant sky,
As light as any feather,
The little moon curves white and high,
In token of fair weather.

EMBERS

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Love Songs, by Sara Teasdale

I said, "My youth is gone
Like a fire beaten out by the rain,
That will never sway and sing
Or play with the wind again."

I said, "It is no great sorrow
That quenched my youth in me,
But only little sorrows
Beating ceaselessly."

I thought my youth was gone,
But you returned--
Like a flame at the call of the wind
It leaped and burned;

Threw off its ashen cloak,
And gowned anew
Gave itself like a bride
Once more to you.

CHINOISERIE

(VILLANELLE). _For B. M._

The Project Gutenberg EBook of
Orchard and Vineyard, by
Victoria Mary (Vita) Sackville-West

LOTUS flowers clustering
Round your feet in storeys laid,
Splendid daughter of a King.

In a graven vase of Ming
Peaches, apricots of jade,
Lotus flowers clustering,

All their scentless riches bring,
All around your throne displayed,
Costly daughter of a King.

What young prince astonishing
Rides along the inky glade,
Lotus flowers clustering

Round his camel travelling?
See the leopards unafraid,
Slender daughter of a King!

Coromandel picturing,
Strangely, marvellously made.
Lotus flowers clustering,

Nightingales that cannot sing,
What celestial escapade
Are they nightly witnessing,
Through lotus flowers clustering,
O subtle daughter of a King?

EIGHTEEN SIXTY-ONE

The Project Gutenberg EBook of
Leaves of Grass, by Walt Whitman

Arm'd year--year of the struggle,
No dainty rhymes or sentimental love verses for you terrible year,
Not you as some pale poetling seated at a desk lisping cadenzas piano,
But as a strong man erect, clothed in blue clothes, advancing,
 carrying rifle on your shoulder,
With well-gristled body and sunburnt face and hands, with a knife in
 the belt at your side,
As I heard you shouting loud, your sonorous voice ringing across the
 continent,
Your masculine voice O year, as rising amid the great cities,
Amid the men of Manhattan I saw you as one of the workmen, the
 dwellers in Manhattan,
Or with large steps crossing the prairies out of Illinois and Indiana,
Rapidly crossing the West with springy gait and descending the Alleghenies,
Or down from the great lakes or in Pennsylvania, or on deck along
 the Ohio river,
Or southward along the Tennessee or Cumberland rivers, or at
 Chattanooga on the mountain top,
Saw I your gait and saw I your sinewy limbs clothed in blue, bearing
 weapons, robust year,
Heard your determin'd voice launch'd forth again and again,
Year that suddenly sang by the mouths of the round-lipp'd cannon,
I repeat you, hurrying, crashing, sad, distracted year.

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